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REQUIREMENTS

Our problem is not how to "coordinate" requirements—it is how to give good guidance to collectors.

Complaining about the requirements process has been a popular activity in the intelligence community for many years. It appears to be especially popular at the present time, and a number of panaceas are being considered as a result of the current rash of complaints. Some of the complaints, however, are based on a misunderstanding of the requirements process and the panaceas seem to be directed toward the solution of superficial problems rather than getting at fundamental difficulties.

Collectors frequently complain of being asked the same question or related questions by two or more components of the intelligence community. They also complain that they are sometimes asked inappropriate questions or that the same questions are asked of various collectors resulting in duplicate effort on the part of the collectors that might have been avoided if the question had been addressed to only one collector. On the other side of the coin, analysts complain of the effort required to formulate requirements for submission to what appears to them to be a bureaucratic morass. Many of them complain of the effort especially as

they feel that the results are seldom worth the effort and that many of their requirements are levied on collectors without ever being fulfilled.

These complaints are the result of a number of factors which include the following:

- (a) Collectors serve a complex of customers whose interests overlap to a considerable degree.
- (b) Many analysts have unrealistic expectations concerning what can be accomplished by collectors.
- (c) Many collectors do not understand the substance involved in the requirements they are being asked to fulfill.
- (d) Many analysts seek insurance for the fulfillment of their important requirements by levying what is essentially the same requirement in various ways and on various collectors.
- (e) Some of the more aggressive analysts badger collectors or engage in unprofitable sniping contests.

The causes of these complaints may not be particularly praiseworthy but they are essentially human causes. It may be possible to educate both collectors and analysts and organize their relationship in such a way as to reduce these causes, but as long as

human beings are involved, the causes will not disappear completely. It is important to recognize, therefore, that a certain amount of complaining is inherent in the situation and will not be eliminated by changes in procedure.

If requirements are considered to be purely a procedural problem, there is no question but what the requirements process could be organized in a much more efficient manner than it is today. However, the intelligence community exists to produce the intelligence required by policy and operational elements of the government. Intelligence does not exist to maintain a smooth running requirements process. Naturally we want the requirements and any other process involved in the production of intelligence to be as efficient as possible, but our main focus must be to maximize the efficiency of the production of intelligence rather than one of the subordinate processes and highly efficient production of intelligence can conceivably result in an inefficient subordinate process.

Finished intelligence is based on information already available to the intelligence community, and requirements are issued to guide collectors in order that they may collect the information needed for the production of future intelligence on known or anticipated problems. If the analysts were completely efficient they would anticipate all problems and issue requirements

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appropriately. However, they are human beings and the requirements issued by them will never provide complete guidance to collectors. In many cases an educated and well-informed collector intimately familiar with a particular situation in a foreign area can tell better what should be collected and reported to headquarters than could any analyst.

The simplest form of collecting information and producing intelligence would be to have one man do both jobs and in many respects an analyst is always a collector to a certain extent. Given the magnitude of the intelligence problem, however, it is generally more efficient to divide up the task with specialized collectors serving the analysts.

If one analyst were responsible for one subject and if nobody else were interested in that subject, there would be no problem in coordinating requirements. But even in this case there would be a competition among the analysts responsible for different subjects, inasmuch as they would be competing for scarce collection assets. In other words, to satisfy all the requirements of all the analysts, even if there were no duplication of interests of the analysts in such a case, there would be no need to coordinate requirements, but there would remain a need to coordinate the collection of information in order that the collectors could focus on the more important requirements.

In reality the situation is much more complex than the simple situation described above. By the very nature of the United States Government and the complexity of activity in a modern society, we have many analysts interested in most subjects. This problem of complexity is one that cannot be cured by reorganizing intelligence. Even if there were only two analysts in the United States intelligence community the complexity of modern life would cause some overlap of interest. In such a situation there will always be multiple interests and the generation of overlapping requirements.

It is the responsibility of an analyst to know what information has already been collected. We have devised many aids in the intelligence community to assist the analysts with this task. Many directors of research have devised check lists for individual analysts to use when producing intelligence or requirements. Judgment of the pertinence of previously collected information to a requirement is a substantive matter that must be done by the producers of intelligence. It cannot be done by a staff officer unless the staff officer were to duplicate the substantive competence and research of the analysts.

It would also appear feasible to make the analyst responsible for knowing what was being asked by the other analysts in the intelligence community with whom he habitually works. Most analysts of any stature in the intelligence community knew the

main analysts who work on closely related substance in other parts of the intelligence community. Many of these people are organized into committees that are used to working together on substantive matters. The formulating of requirements on a coordinated basis or transmittal of such information among such a group should be a relatively easy task.

The individual analyst cannot be expected, however, to be aware of overlapping requirements generated by other parts of the intelligence community with which he does not habitually work. This knowledge should be supplied by a staff element. A register of existing requirements would provide a useful tool in such a situation.

All analysts should be allowed to ask for what they think they need since this is a logical part of their substantive responsibility.

Allocation or substantive responsibility is made by the highest levels of authority in the intelligence community and should not be interfered with by a non-substantive staff at a lower level. The analyst can say which of his requirements are more important to him than others, but the individual analysts cannot say whether his top priority requirement is more or less important than the top priority requirements of another analyst. This again is a substantive problem but of such a nature that

it has to be resolved by research directors or other competent officers at a higher level of responsibility.

Usually requirements should be written with a specific collector or collectors in mind. The method of collection often has a direct bearing on the detail and reliability of the substance collected and must, therefore, be of concern to the analyst. The analyst, with advice of requirements staff officers, should pick a specific collector to whom the requirement should be directed.

The intelligence community has devised certain general guidelines such as Priority National Intelligence Objectives to record a substantive agreement concerning the relative priority of various intelligence problems, but these are only general guides and cannot be applied mechanically. The substantive situation changes from day to day and the priority of a given requirement must be determined in the light of the existing substantive situation rather than in the light of a rigid interpretation of such things as PNIO's.

An important point to keep in mind is that requirements vary in importance to such an extent that they justify varying amounts of work. It would be a mistake to treat all requirements according to an identical process. This would hinder the fulfillment of important requirements, and inflate the effort devoted to unimportant requirements.

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It goes without saying that important requirements should result in action in the part of collectors. Collectors should operate in such a way as to devote a maximum amount of effort to the fulfillment of important requirements, recognizing that there will always be a residue of collection effort which for one reason or another will be devoted to requirements of lesser importance. It should also be recognized that there will always be a certain amount of by-product collection of information and that in the general nature of things many of the requirements of lesser importance will be satisfied by this by-product collection.

The main problem is not the "coordination" of requirements. The real problem is how to distinguish those requirements that should result in action by collectors from those that we can afford to leave to be fulfilled by by-product collection, or not at all, and how to assist the collectors to maximize their effort in the fulfillment of important requirements.

I would strongly recommend that we not set up an elaborate machine to "coordinate" requirements. This is a good way to develop bureaucracy and bring the whole thing to a screaming and well-coordinated halt. Instead I would recommend that we:

(a) consider ways in which we could cut back the routine process of requirements. Routine processing should occur

only for those requirements not aimed at a specific source and should include the decision concerning the source or sources to which they should be referred.

(b) set up a central register of requirements as a research tool.

(c) pass all requirements designed for a specific collector through a committee charged with supervising requirements levied on that collector (comor, IFC, etc.). As such the committee should be composed of representatives of the collector and of the main intelligence producing components levying requirements on that collector. The committee should agree on those requirements that should receive action by the collector and their relative priority. The committee should also note those requirements that should be left for fulfillment by by-product collection. In other words, the committee should start considering what it believes to be the most important requirements and should work down through the list. The committees should be composed of senior people of substantive competence and broad experience in intelligence. Each committee should have an adequate secretariat wherever possible and there should be overlapping membership among the committees advising various collectors in order that each committee may have some first hand knowledge of the most important requirements being levied on other collection

systems. I would expect that each committee could be given an adequate secretariat and that the intelligence community would end up using fewer people in the handling of requirements than it would need if an elaborate requirements coordination mechanism were set up in a central place.

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